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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 TEGUCIGALPA 000099

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SUBJECT: HONDURAN PRESIDENT LOBO'S CABINET TAKES SHAPE

Classified By: Amb. Hugo Llorens, E.O. 12958, 1.4(d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary/Introduction: President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo began to officially announce the members of his cabinet and inner circle on January 26, the day before his inauguration, and made further announcements over the next two days. He has still not named ministers for defense, agriculture, international cooperation, and natural resources and environment. With three of his presidential election opponents, representatives from all the established political parties, two members of the pro-Zelaya Resistance, and two union activists in his cabinet, Lobo has succeeded in putting together a government of national unity, fulfilling a provision of the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord. One of the remaining vacancies may come from former presidential candidate Elvin Santos's wing of the Liberal Party. Several appointees previously worked for the GOH under President Maduro (2002-2006). Biographic information on the cabinet members follows. End summary/introduction.

Presidency

¶2. (U) Maria Antonieta Guillen-Bogran, First Presidential Designate: Bogran will be appointed "in charge" of the Ministry of the Presidency, but will not become Minister, and will carry out those duties in tandem with her position as First Presidential Designate. She served as Lobo's campaign manager and was a consultant at the Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Foundation, which promotes education. Bogran served as Minister of Tourism during the tenure of President Ricardo Maduro (2002 to 2006). She served as director of the Honduran Institute of Tourism under the administration of President Rafael Callejas (1990 to 1994). During her tenure at the Tourism Institute, Bogran focused on ecotourism development. She also worked in the private sector as a consultant; her clients included the International Development Bank (IDB). In the 1980s, she was head of the department of business administration at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH).

¶3. (U) Samuel Reyes, Presidential Designate: During President Lobo's campaign, he was the general coordinator for the National Party's youth group. Over the past month, Reyes represented agricultural interests for Lobo's transition committee.

¶4. (U) Victor Hugo Barnica, Presidential Designate: Barnica was the secretary of the National Congress from 2002 to 2006. While in Congress, he also served as vice president of the commission on health and was a member of the commission on foreign relations. In addition to his work in Congress, he is a medical doctor.

¶5. (U) Marlon Tabora Munoz, Vice Minister of the Presidency and Chief of Staff: Tabora has a bachelor's degree in mechanic industrial engineering, a master's in technical marketing and international business and a doctorate in science administration. He worked in various positions at the Honduran Telecommunications Company (HONDUTEL), including project engineer and infrastructure project manager. In 1993, Tabora left HONDUTEL to manage the construction of the Central Bank headquarters. In 1995, he joined the Grupo Inversiones La Paz, also known as Grupo Maduro. In 2002, he was appointed to head CONATEL, Honduras's telecommunications regulator. He served as an advisor to President Lobo's campaign.

Cabinet Members and Other Senior Officials

Foreign Relations: Mario Miguel Canahuati

¶6. (U) Canahuati was the Honduran Ambassador to the United
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States from 2002 to 2005 during the presidency of Ricardo Maduro (2002-2006). After losing to President Lobo in the 2004 presidential primary, he was named vice presidential candidate on Lobo's ticket in the February 2005 primary election. After Lobo won the National Party candidacy, Canahuati resigned his post as Ambassador to concentrate on campaigning for the 2005 general election.

¶7. (SBU) Canahuati ran again for President in the National Party primary elections of 2008, losing again to Lobo. He and Lobo have subsequently battled for power within the party, although they have been able to see beyond their differences, as evidenced by their traveling together on a trip to Washington, D.C. in June 2009.

¶8. (U) Mario Canahuati is the son of Juan Canahuati, one of San Pedro Sula's wealthiest industrialists. Canahuati served as a representative of Honduran private businesses in bilateral trade negotiations with neighboring Central American countries. He was the vice president of the New Life Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing affordable housing in the San Pedro Sula area. He has been an advocate for improving the Honduran education system, working with the Educatodos Project sponsored by USAID. He also previously served as the President of the Honduran National Business Council (COHEP).

Security: Oscar Arturo Alvarez Guerra

¶9. (SBU) Alvarez ran for a congressional seat in the Department of Francisco Morazan and received the most votes of any congressional candidate in the November 2009 general election. A skilled politician and charismatic individual, Alvarez may be a formidable contender should he run to be the National Party's presidential candidate in 2014.

¶10. (SBU) Alvarez was appointed by former President Ricardo Maduro to serve as Minister of Security on August 3, 2002, after previously serving as the Vice Minister in the same ministry. As Minister of Public Security, Alvarez played a key role in the implementation of the U.S. Homeland Security's Container Security Initiative (CSI). Alvarez resigned from his position on November 14, 2005 in order to

help with the campaign of National Party presidential hopeful Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo. Following Lobo,s defeat in 2005, Alvarez accepted a position at the Honduran Consulate in Houston, Texas on January 1, 2006, in order to find a sanctuary from the multiple death threats he received because of his hard-hitting policies on crime as Minister of Security. Alvarez's wife, Elena continues to live in Houston, Texas with her four children.

¶11. (U) From 1999 to 2001, Alvarez was a law enforcement consultant for DynCorp, during which time he worked closely with the Embassy,s police assistance initiative as a contractor for the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). He served as advisor to former President Rafael Callejas (1990-1994) on security and policymatters from 1990 to 1993 and served as Assistant Defense Attach at the Honduran Embassy in Washington, D.C. from 1986 to 1990.

¶12. (C) Alvarez is characterized as a smooth politician and lobbyist who, following his years of work with ICITAP, is especially adept at handling American officials. Alvarez also has an obvious thirst for power. He favors strong police and military forces to tackle security problems. He is a close confidant of former Honduran Presidents and National Party leaders Rafael Callejas and Ricardo Maduro.

¶13. (U) Alvarez earned a Bachelor,s degree in political science with a minor in psychology from Texas A&M University. He was the first member of the Honduran military selected as a Fulbright Scholar, obtaining a Master,s degree from Johns Hopkins University. Alvarez attended several military schools in the US and completed Airborne and Ranger training.

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Culture, Arts, and Sports: Bernard Martinez

¶14. (U) Martinez was the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Innovation and Unity Party (PINU) in the 2009 general election. He is a Garifuna leader from the northern coast and was one of the first two Afro-Honduran presidential candidates in Honduras.

¶15. (U) From 2006 to 2009, Martinez was the Municipal Commissioner for the city of La Ceiba. Martinez served as PINU,s President from 2004 to 2006, and he unsuccessfully ran for a congressional seat representing the departments of Atlantida and Colon in 2001 and 2005, respectively. In 2000, he was a member of the Peace Commission for Colombia sponsored by UN Human Rights Commission. He joined PINU in 1996 and was the party's vice presidential candidate in 1997. He was a member and activist of the Ethnic Community Development Organization from 1996 to 2005. He became active in the Medical Workers, Union (SITRAMEDHYS) in 1986, and served as president of its La Ceiba branch in 1995 and president of its Trujillo area branch from 1990 to 1993. From 1984 to 1985 Martinez acted as the Coordinator of Environmental Health in La Ceiba, Atlantida. In the early 1980s, he was a member of the Honduran Patriotic Front, a left-wing electoral alliance.

¶16. (SBU) In the aftermath of the June, 28, 2009 coup d,tat, Martinez criticized President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya,s plan to hold a poll on whether the general election should include a referendum on a constitutional assembly. Not all members of the PINU party fully supported the candidacy of Martinez, as some of its members were vehemently opposed to holding an election unless President Zelaya was reinstated to office.

Labor and Social Security: Felicito Avila Ordonez

¶17. (SBU) Avila was the presidential candidate of the

Christian Democratic Party in the 2009 general election and came in fourth in a field of five candidates. Avila is widely liked and viewed as an honest and hardworking man. He is well-known mainly due to his work in the labor movement. Avila has held positions including General Center of Workers representative to the Honduran Institute of Social Security, delegation member of the Central American Free Trade Agreement-Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR) negotiations, Civil Society Representative in the Consultative Group for Central America in Washington, D.C. and Stockholm, Sweden, and representative for the Latin American Workers Committee (CLAT), a group representing more than 20 million organized laborers.

Governance and Justice: Carlos Africo Madrid Hart

¶18. (U) Madrid was elected Vice President of the National Party at the party's national convention on March 14, 2009. He served as the official spokesman of the National Party for the political campaign of 2009 and as the executive secretary of the party and director of its central committee. He also served as a member of the legislature. As a member of congress, Madrid fought against Honduras joining the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA). He was a vocal supporter of the de facto regime that took power following the June 28 coup d'etat.

¶19. (U) Madrid served as Assistant Labor Minister under President Maduro in 2005. From February 2002 to May 2004, Madrid acted as liaison on behalf of the Supreme Court to the Honduran Election Tribunal.

Public Works and Transportation (SOPTRAVI): Miguel Pastor

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¶20. (U) Pastor was the National Party Mayor of Tegucigalpa from 2002 to 2006. Before that, he served as a member of Congress for the Department of Francisco Morazan from 1998 through 2002, where he was a member of the Finance, Media, Commerce, and Defense Commissions. He was an alternate congressional representative from 1994 through 1998.

¶21. (SBU) During the 2008 primary election, Pastor launched an unsuccessful second bid for the National Party presidential candidacy. Pastor is considered a possible contender in the 2014 presidential race.

¶22. (U) Pastor's mother was the Consul General of the Honduran Consulate in New Orleans, and Pastor spent a significant period of his youth in the United States. He earned a degree in business administration and finance from the University of New Orleans in 1988.

Minister of Education: Alejandro Ventura

¶23. (C) Ventura is a teachers union leader and has been the president of the First Teachers Union (Prichma) for twenty years. Very active in the "resistance" in the post-coup period, he was responsible for organizing and leading teachers' strikes. Ventura was part of the group of teachers that developed the education proposal used in Lobo's campaign.

Industry and Commerce: Oscar Armando Escalante Ayala

¶24. (U) Escalante is a longtime labor leader who was elected assistant Secretary General of the General Workers Confederation (CGT) in 1980 and later served as the National Party's Secretary for Worker and Peasant Issues. In 1990, he took a leave of absence from his leadership position with the CGT and was the congressional deputy for Olancho, helping formulate the GOH's labor policy. After vacating his

congressional seat in 1994, he continued working as an official advisor to congress, a four-year position. Escalante lost bids for congress in both 2005 and 2008. For the past several years, Escalante has managed capacity building programs for the National Party. Escalante was the recipient of a USIS International Visitor grant in 1988.

Health: Arturo "Tuky" Bendana Pinel

¶25. (U) Bendana is a doctor (gynecologist) by trade who until recently served as an alderman in San Pedro Sula. Bendana ran for mayor of San Pedro Sula on Lobo's National Party ticket in 2005 and 2009, losing both races. He comes from a family of doctors that founded Hospital Bendana and has also worked as the director of Hospital Mario Catarino Rivas (the largest hospital in San Pedro Sula).

Finance: William Chong Wong

¶26. (U) Wong served as Deputy Minister of Finance and then briefly as Minister of Finance in the administration of President Maduro. Previously, he was director of the Honduran tax administration. Prior to his appointment, Wong served as an economic consultant and administrator at Unitec, the national technological university. Wong is a longstanding economic advisor to the National Party.

Central Bank: Maria Elena Mondragon de Villar

¶27. (U) Mondragon earned a master's degree in economics from Memphis State University and a bachelor's degree in economics from the Autonomous National University of Honduras. She served as Central Bank president during the administration of President Ricardo Maduro. Previously, she had a long career as a staff member at the Central Bank. Mondragon served a term as president of the Central American

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Monetary Council from 2002 to 2003. Prior positions include director of commercial policy at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and financial manager of the Atlantida Group, a financial and banking consortium. Most recently, Mondragon served as director of economics and finance of the Foundation for the Promotion of Democracy and Social Well-Being (FUNDEMOS).

Revenue Service (DEI): Jose Oswaldo Guillen

¶28. (U) Guillen is a partner in Bufete Guillen, Guillen & Asociados, a prominent Tegucigalpa law firm. He previously served as Secretary General of the Ministry of Governance and Justice. In addition to his legal practice, he is a law professor at the national university. As a student in 1998, he participated in a USAID study tour of the U.S. justice system. He is a member of a prominent National Party family.

Agrarian National Institute: Cesar Ham

¶29. (U) Ham is president of the Democratic Unification Party (UD) and has served as congressman for the department of Yoro. A sociologist by training, Ham was the presidential candidate of UD in the November 2009 general election.

¶30. (SBU) In the aftermath of the June 28, 2009 coup d'état, Ham supported President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya. He played a key role in the organization of the "fourth urn" poll scheduled for June 28, 2009 which would have asked the public whether they supported a referendum on the holding of a Constituent Assembly being included in the November 2009 general election. During the election campaign season, Ham threatened to resign his candidacy if President Zelaya was

not reinstated to office prior to elections, but decided to stay in the race on November 21, just eight days before Election Day. This created a schism in the Democratic Unification Party because some party members accused Ham of contravening the party's decision that its members would forego congressional perks.

Tourism: Nelly Jerez

¶31. (U) Jerez formerly served as a member of Congress for the National Party. She is a close associate of President Lobo. Jerez is a dentist by profession.

Communications: Miguel Angel Bonilla

¶32. (U) Bonilla served as director of communication for President Lobo during his presidential campaign. His father was Minister of Agriculture under President Flores (1998 to 2002). He has a degree in communications from an American university.

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